

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 /073 W

-----100355Z 117941 /73

R 100012Z FEB 77

FM AMCONGEN HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3720

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 01669

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, VN

SUBJECT: FURTHER COMMENTS ON CHANGES IN VIETNAM POLITBURO

REF: PARIS 2008

1. COMMENTING ON RECENT DISAPPEARANCE OF HOANG VAN HOAN FROM VIETNAM'S POLITBURO AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE, FRENCH CONSUL HERE REPORTED EXPLANATION FROM FRENCH EMBASSY IN HANOI THAT HOAN WAS OUSTED BECAUSE OF DISAGREEMENT OVER SRV POLICY WITH CHINA (REPORTED REFTEL) AND ALSO BECAUSE OF HIS GENERAL UNPOPULARITY WITH SOUTH EAST ASIAN COMMUNIST PARTIES (NO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED ON THIS POINT). THE FRENCH NOTED THAT SRV OFFICIAL LINE IS THAT HOAN'S DISAPPEARANCE WAS DUE TO ILLNESS.

2. ITALIAN CONGEN OFFICIAL PROVIDED VIEWS OF ITALIAN AMBASSADOR TO HANOI ON GENERAL GIAP'S DEMOTION FROM 5TH TO 6TH PLACE IN POLITBURO LINEUP. ACCORDING TO THE AMBASSADOR, THE CHANGE WAS MADE TO EMPHASIZE PARTY SUPREMACY OVER THE ARMY IN THE POST WAR PERIOD AND WAS MEANT AS A SIGNAL TO THE NATION THAT THE WAR WAS OVER AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WAS NOW THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE. GIAP IS REPORTED TO HAVE PERSONALLY  
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APPROVED THE CHANGE.

3. COMMENT: WE HAVE NO WAY OF CONFIRMING THE ABOVE ANALYSIS. HOAN'S JANUARY 6 APPEARANCE IN HIS GOVERNMENT ROLE AT THE SRV NATIONAL ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING SEEMS TO DISCREDIT THE THEORY THAT HE LEFT BECAUSE OF ILLNESS. HOAN IS CERTAINLY HEALTHIER THAN SRV PRESIDENT TON DUC THANG WHO

HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS RAPIDLY APPROACHING SENILITY BUT STILL REMAINS A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. SINCE HOAN WAS FOR A LONG TIME INVOLVED WITH PRC POLICY, HE MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN OUSTED (OR RESIGNED) BECAUSE OF A DISAGREEMENT IN THIS AREA. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT HOAN ADVOCATED THE CHINESE VIEW OF SUPPORTING BUT NOT EXPORTING REVOLUTION WHICH WOULD CERTAINLY MAKE HIM UNPOPULAR WITH SEA COMMUNIST MOVEMENTS HOPING FOR SRV ASSISTANCE. WHAT SEEMS CLEAR TO US IN THESE CHANGES IS THAT 16 YEARS OF VIETNAMESE LEADERSHIP SOLIDARITY HAS FINALLY CRACKED AND INCREASED STRUGGLES AND PURGES COULD BE MORE FREQUENT NOW THAT THE LONG STANDING EQUILIBRIUM HAS BEEN BROKEN.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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